

# Safety On The Road

## Driving Drowsy Is A Lousy Idea!

Fatigue is difficult to prevent in the 24-hour industry of trucking. It is hard to say “no” to a trip or to stop for sleep when there is a delivery to make. However, transport routes and schedules must be planned so the loads can be delivered safely and legally, staying within the speed limit with adequate sleep and rest periods for the drivers.

Overnight driving is especially tough because most people’s body clocks say it is time to sleep. Studies show truckers are most vulnerable to fatigue in the early morning between 3 and 5 a.m., as well as the late afternoon between 3 and 5 p.m.

One symptom of fatigue is called highway hypnosis. It occurs when you have been driving a long stretch of straight road with few distractions. It also can occur when rain, snow or fog conditions limit visibility. You lose your sense of speed and you become unconcerned with the dangers. Things just seem to be drifting by and you fall asleep.

Here are some techniques for preventing fatigue behind the wheel, whether you are a professional driver or take the occasional long trip:

- Get adequate sleep before you drive.
- Try not to drive during your normal sleeping hours.
- If you get sleepy, get off the road for a nap.
- Plan to reach highway rest areas or overnight accommodation in time for your sleep period. Looking for a place to park can cut into your sleep time.
- Do not eat a heavy meal before you drive. Save it until after your driving shift.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages before driving. Also avoid medications which can cause drowsiness — read the labels and talk to your pharmacist.
- Keep the cab temperature reasonably cool, with good circulation of fresh air. Open a window if necessary.
- If possible, shift your seating position frequently. Do stretching exercises to keep limber and alert.
- Take breaks every two hours. Get out and walk around in the fresh air for a few minutes.
- If possible, change drivers frequently.
- Don’t just stare at the road ahead. Keep your eyes moving and watch the traffic all around you. Use your rear view mirrors often to check the traffic behind and beside you.
- Read all the traffic signs.
- Check the instrument panel frequently, especially to monitor your speed.
- Music on the radio, an interesting audio tape or conversation on your CB radio can help you stay alert.
- Keep your vehicle properly maintained to eliminate exposure to carbon monoxide gas. A small dose can cause dizziness and drowsiness and a larger dose can be fatal.
- Wear good sunglasses in bright sunlight to prevent fatigue caused by eyestrain.

*Don’t drive drowsy! Get enough sleep before your shift, and if you can’t stay alert — pull over!*

The information presented in Copy Ready! has been compiled from various sources which are believed to be reliable. However, it cannot be assumed that all acceptable measures are contained in this article nor that additional measures may not be required under particular or exceptional circumstances, or your own company procedures, or by federal, state/provincial and local law. Copy Ready! is intended for in-house use only — commercial reproduction is a violation of our copyright agreement.

For a complete catalog of Bongarde Communications Ltd. products please call 1-800-667-9300 or visit us at [www.safetysmart.com](http://www.safetysmart.com).

© MCMXCVII Bongarde Communications Ltd.

#V6109

# Driving Drowsy Is A Lousy Idea!

- Don't drive drowsy! Get enough sleep before your shift, and if you can't stay alert — pull over!*

# Safety On The Road

## Driving Drowsy Is A Lousy Idea!

Fatigue is difficult to prevent in the 24-hour industry of trucking. It is hard to say “no” to a trip or to stop for sleep when there is a delivery to make. However, transport routes and schedules must be planned so the loads can be delivered safely and legally, staying within the speed limit with adequate sleep and rest periods for the drivers.

Overnight driving is especially tough because most people’s body clocks say it is time to sleep. Studies show truckers are most vulnerable to fatigue in the early morning between 3 and 5 a.m., as well as the late afternoon between 3 and 5 p.m.

One symptom of fatigue is called highway hypnosis. It occurs when you have been driving a long stretch of straight road with few distractions. It also can occur when rain, snow or fog conditions limit visibility. You lose your sense of speed and you become unconcerned with the dangers. Things just seem to be drifting by and you fall asleep.

**Here are some techniques for preventing fatigue behind the wheel, whether you are a professional driver or take the occasional long trip:**

- Get adequate sleep before you drive.
- Try not to drive during your normal sleeping hours.



- If you get sleepy, get off the road for a nap.
- Plan to reach highway rest areas or overnight accommodation in time for your sleep period. Looking for a place to park can cut into your sleep time.
- Do not eat a heavy meal before you drive. Save it until after your driving shift.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages before driving. Also avoid medications which can cause drowsiness — read the labels and talk to your pharmacist.
- Keep the cab temperature reasonably cool, with good circulation of fresh air. Open a window if necessary.

- If possible, shift your seating position frequently. Do stretching exercises to keep limber and alert.

- Take breaks every two hours. Get out and walk around in the fresh air for a few minutes.
- If possible, change drivers frequently.
- Don’t just stare at the road ahead. Keep your eyes moving and watch the traffic all around you. Use your rear view mirrors often to check the traffic behind and beside you.

- Read all the traffic signs.
- Check the instrument panel frequently, especially to monitor your speed.
- Music on the radio, an interesting audio tape or conversation on your CB radio can help you stay alert.
- Keep your vehicle properly maintained to eliminate exposure to carbon monoxide gas. A small dose can cause dizziness and drowsiness and a larger dose can be fatal.
- Wear good sunglasses in bright sunlight to prevent fatigue caused by eyestrain.

*Don’t drive drowsy! Get enough sleep before your shift, and if you can’t stay alert — pull over!*

The information presented in Copy Ready! has been compiled from various sources which are believed to be reliable. However, it cannot be assumed that all acceptable measures are contained in this article nor that additional measures may not be required under particular or exceptional circumstances, or your own company procedures, or by federal, state/provincial and local law. Copy Ready! is intended for in-house use only — commercial reproduction is a violation of our copyright agreement.

For a complete catalog of Bongarde Communications Ltd. products please call 1-800-667-9300 or visit us at [www.safetysmart.com](http://www.safetysmart.com).

© MCMXCVII Bongarde Communications Ltd.

#V6109